CHILDREN WHO ARE NEEDLESSLY BLIND

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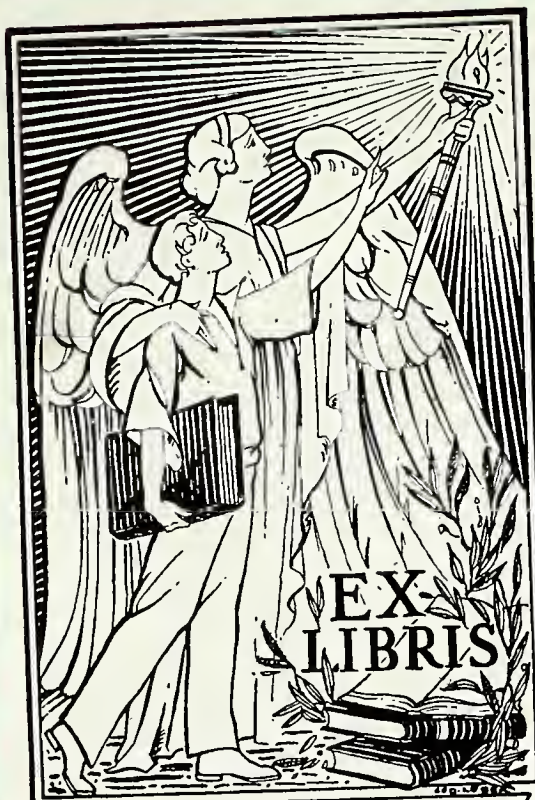


AMERICAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE BLIND INC.

Why not to the people of our nearest neighbor? While things are mending there is still profound distress in many parts of Mexico with the poorer classes. Among the many fine traits of these people is a deep and abiding sense of gratitude. Just a little work of the practical kind would end at once the feeling of distrust against this country for which recent events have given only too good cause. From the bare standpoint of selfishness, no investment could bring better fruit."

A STATE HOUSE CLINIC ON HEALTH INSURANCE

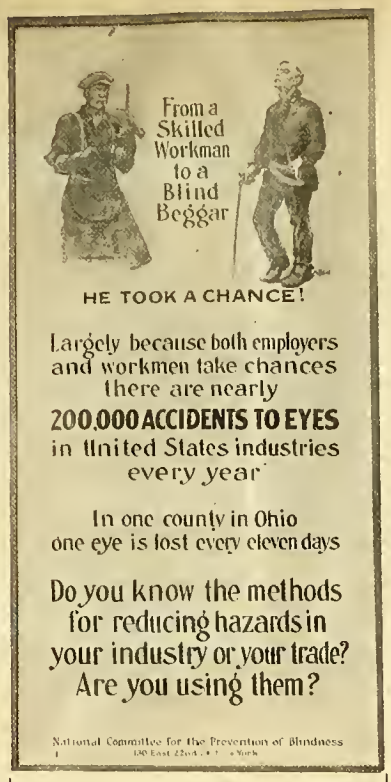
THE MASSACHUSETTS Commission on Social Insurance held its first public hearing on October 3, in the largest audience room in the State House, twice moving to accommodate the interested people who thronged in, several hundred, in all, and remained until after 11 o'clock at night when the discussion closed.

The commission gave its undivided attention to the subject of health insurance, postponing for future consideration the other two parts of its program indicated by Governor McCall, insurance for old-age and for unemployment. Said Caroll W. Doten, a member of the social insurance committee of the American Association of Labor Legislation, in concluding his discussion of the proposed measure:

"I was a member of the Massachusetts commission to prepare workman's compensation bills five years ago; and although there had been several years of spirited discussion of the accident problem, we never had so large a hearing indicative of keen public interest as is shown in this on health insurance. The opposition to health insurance is also milder than that to workman's compensation."

Prominent representatives of hospitals, dispensaries, visiting nurse organizations, labor organizations and practicing physicians as well as social workers were present and spoke at the hearing. A few employers talked about paternalism and pauperism; a few physicians seemed to fear that their practice would be interfered with if such a law as the compulsory insurance law were passed, and others thought that the efficiency of present hospitals and dispensaries would be lessened. But the majority of the audience realized that the present equipment for health protection of Massachusetts was entirely inadequate, and saw in the new movement possibilities of great value. At its recent convention the Massachusetts Federation of Labor, in common with several other prominent labor organizations, instructed its legislative committee to support the health insurance campaign.

The hearings were reported fully in the press all over the state, many papers commenting editorially upon the proposed insurance plan, and indicating cordial approval.


From a Skilled Workman to a Blind Beggar
HE TOOK A CHANCE!
Largely because both employers and workmen take chances there are nearly
200,000 ACCIDENTS TO EYES
in United States industries every year
In one county in Ohio one eye is lost every eleven days
Do you know the methods for reducing hazards in your industry or your trade? Are you using them?
National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness

ONE of five panels in a new exhibit on industrial hazards to the eye, prepared by the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness for use at gatherings of employers and employes. Miniature reproductions and half-tone plates for publication may be had of the committee at 130 East 22 street, New York city. North Carolina, and then Minnesota, are to have state-wide educational campaigns in charge of the committee's field secretary, Gordon L. Berry. The new secretary of both the national and New York state committees is Winifred Hathaway.

CHILDREN WHO ARE NEEDLESSLY BLIND

THE National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness has recently completed a census of the causes of blindness that are responsible for the enrollment of 3,858 children in 31 state schools for the blind and 4 classes for blind children in public school systems, during the year 1915-16.

Foremost among the causes discovered is ophthalmia neonatorum, or "babies sore eyes," an inflammation of the membrane covering eyelids and eyeballs, appearing a few days after birth, and frequently (though not always) indicating a syphilitic infection. It has been one of the most prolific and needless sources of blindness in the United States.

The first such census was taken in 1910 by the New York Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, and the number of pupils then blind from ophthalmia neonatorum out of the total of 2,018 in the 16 schools reporting, was 521, or 25.8 per cent. Since that year there has been a gradual decrease recorded until the figures for the year just ended show out of the total enrollment of 3,858, 843 (21.8 per cent) blind from this disease. As to the outlook, Gordon L. Berry writes:

"Of the 666 pupils newly enrolled for the year 1915-16, there were 127 (19 per cent) blind from ophthalmia neonatorum. This is the lowest percentage reported during the past nine years with the exception of that in the school year 1914-15, 15.1 per cent. This gratifying annual decrease is undoubtedly attributable to a more general understanding of the dangers from inflammation of the eyes of the new born, and the adoption of preventive measures."

The census reports the highest percentages of pupils blind from this disease to be in Vermont, 50 per cent; Colorado, 38.6 per cent, and New Mexico, 37.3 per cent. In Vermont and New Mexico there are almost no legislative provisions for prevention of blindness from this cause.

Among pupils newly admitted, the highest percentage for the past year is shown in the figures from Nebraska—50 per cent, with Maryland a close second—40 per cent.

Causes other than ophthalmia neonatorum found to account for pupils' blindness were: accident, 306; progressive near-sightedness, 77; trachoma, 56; interstitial keratitis, 146; decay of optic nerve, 340; congenital defects, 824; wood alcohol poisoning, 5.

That in addition to wide publicity, legal provisions are necessary, the committee urges strongly. Its "Leaflet No. 9" just issued, gives a tabulation of laws on this subject in the different states, summarizing the information as follows:

The reporting of babies' sore eyes to the local health officer, or to a physician is compulsory in	37	states
The reporting law is printed on the birth certificate in	7	"
Local health officers are authorized and required to secure medical attention for uncared-for cases, or to warn parents of the dangers and advise immediate treatment in	21	"
Births are reported early enough to be of assistance in prevention of blindness work in	11	"
The question as to whether or not precautions were taken against ophthalmia neonatorum is included on the birth certificate in	14	"
Free prophylactic outfits are distributed to physicians and midwives in	16	"
The use of a prophylactic (specified by the State Board of Health) as a routine, is compulsory in	15	"
and strongly recommended in an additional	5	"

Popular educational leaflets, relating in whole or in part to

prevention of infantile blindness, are distributed by State Departments of Health in..... 29 states

FEDERAL HELP TO A STRICKEN CITY

THE advantages of having the federal Public Health Service mount guard over New York's maritime quarantine were pointed out by THE SURVEY last winter (see THE SURVEY for January 8, 1916). Recently the value of the service has been further demonstrated, this time in domestic interstate quarantine in connection with the epidemic of poliomyelitis.

Since the first of July nearly 50 officers of the service have been in the city, one group engaged in epidemiological work; the other, stationed at ferries and other points of departure from the city, issuing, under proper credentials, certificates that, as far as can be known, no infection has existed in the homes of those about to travel. In view of the decrease in the number of cases of poliomyelitis in New York, and therefore the lessening danger that people who leave the city may carry infection with them, this quarantine division, under the leadership of Dr. Charles E. Banks, will presently withdraw from the city.

Certain definite results of permanent value for public health work have followed. The examination by trained officials who were not influenced by local sentiment. With the memory still in mind of other epidemics of various kinds, officials in other states naturally looked with suspicion on any certificate issued by local authorities of New York, as coming from those interested.

Finally, the work of the Public Health Service officers has been a demonstration of the value of a centralized authority with power to deal with interstate problems of disease transmitted by common carriers, and with the backing of congressional statute. Such backing is provided for the Service officers by the quarantine law of 1893.

COUNTY BOARDS OF PUBLIC WELFARE

A COMPLETE sketch of the recommendations of the Missouri Children's Code Commission is embodied in a preliminary report recently formulated. The report is being used as a basis of criticism and suggestion, and will be followed immediately by the drafting of the entire code. The report covers all classes of children. It develops new and radical standards, and discusses methods of carrying out the provisions of the code.

The chief recommendation for administrative purposes is the creation of a

ated on leased government land in the San Bernardino Mountains at an altitude of 4,500 feet and approximately 76 miles from Los Angeles.

As a camping spot the place is ideal. There is opportunity for long hikes in the forests, for swimming and fishing in the mountain brooks, for tennis, baseball and organized play at the camp itself. This year some forty-six cabins have been constructed as well as a building combining kitchen, store room and cook's headquarters, an open-air dining-room capable of seating 300 people, two modern toilet buildings, a bath house with tubs and showers, a concrete plunge 30 by 65 feet and a graded athletic field. At present a lodge is being completed which will contain an office, reading rooms and a large entertainment hall.

Outings are conducted for boys and men in two groups and for women and girls who also go in two groups. The entire expense covering transportation, food and housing is $7.50 for two weeks or $5.50 for one week. Campers are required to furnish their own bedding, towels and other personal effects.

Not only does this simple wholesome vacation react upon Los Angeles in building up a strong and healthy population but in stirring community responsibility and consciousness. People are glad that they are citizens of Los Angeles when they feel that city officials tak-

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